

# Pitt Student

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January 5, 2018

Mr. Thomas Jones, Director  
Human Resources  
Smith Counseling and Associates  
123 Any Street  
Johnstown, PA 15904

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am writing to apply for the position of Adolescent Counselor with your Smith Counseling and Associates. I became aware of the position from the Pitt-Johnstown Career Services Office. As you will see from my enclosed resume, I possess all of the qualifications you are seeking.

I will graduate from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown in April with my degree in psychology and an overall GPA of 3.7. Outside of the classroom, I obtained valuable experience as an intern at the Alternative Community Resource Program, where I was directly involved in assessing and developing treatment plans for clients between the ages of 12 and 17, the majority of whom had diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder. I further supplemented my coursework with a research project entitled, "The Health Risks of Not Keeping up with the Kardashians," which focused on the television viewing habits of 75 adolescents from a variety of backgrounds. I am scheduled to present my findings at Pitt-Johnstown's Symposium for the Promotion of Academic and Creative Enquiry (SPACE) in April. I recently read the article in the Johnstown Tribune-Democrat about your organization's new sensory room for children on the Autism spectrum. I was especially interested in this article given my extensive experience in working with autistic children.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you and further discuss my qualifications. You can reach me at 814.555.1234. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Pitt Student

Enclosure

## A FEW COVER LETTER TIPS

### **Be Aware of Applicant Tracking Systems:**

An Applicant Tracking System (ATS) is a technology that a growing number of companies are using to manage their recruitment. ATS technology allows employers to identify keywords or skills (specific experience, education, skills, employment experience, degree awarded, etc.) within a job description. When job seekers upload their cover letter and resume electronically, the materials are scanned to identify how many “matches” exist between the cover letter and resume and the ATS. Here are a few suggestions on how to optimize your materials for an ATS:

- Carefully review your cover letter and resume to ensure that key items from the job description are mentioned in your documents.
- Currently, bulleted items are not easily read by ATS. So, consider other formatting options for your resume.
- While we typically recommend uploading your application materials as PDF documents, Microsoft Word is currently the most compatible format with ATS technology.

### **Don't be Wishy Washy**

You want your resume to project confidence and enthusiasm (without being arrogant). Avoid words like, “feel,” ‘believe,’ and “think” from your letter. These words convey uncertainty on your part, which will translate to uncertainty by the recruiter.

### **Do your Research**

Prove that you've done your homework. Reference something specific about the company in your letter (“I have watched your company's successful expansion into the state of Pennsylvania...”, or “I read the article about Company X in the recent issue of *Pennsylvania Business Central*...”). Always be sure to include the name of the company at least once in your letter.

### **Don't “Hey, you!”**

Always try to find the hiring manager's name and include it on your cover letter. Try, at all cost, to avoid using “Dear Hiring Manager,” or “To whom it may concern,” in your salutation. That's the written equivalent of referring to someone as, “Hey, you!” Some experts suggest that if you don't know the name of the hiring manager, you should skip the “Dear XXX” line from your letter.

### **Be succinct.**

Ideally, your cover letter should not be more than 3 paragraphs:

- Paragraph 1: Introduce yourself and indicate your interest in the position. Always include a sentence that makes them want to read further (“As you will see, my combination of education and experience ideally qualify me for this position.”)
- Paragraph 2: Sell yourself. Talk about why YOU are the only candidate they should consider. Address your qualifications and, if possible, use examples (“reduced wait time by 60%,” “increased sales by 25%”). Don't just summarize what's on your resume.
- Paragraph 3: Thank the reader for his/her time and include a call to action. A call to action could be something like, “I look forward to talking with you about my qualifications.” Always talk about positive things. Your cover letter is not the place to talk about how you overcame a struggle. That's a conversation for the interview.

### **Ask not what the company can do for you**

Always talk about what YOU can do for the company. Don't talk about ways you would benefit from the position. Remember, the company wants to choose someone who will be committed to its growth and success.

### **Be Positive**

Don't speak negatively about employers, professors, schools, or experiences in your cover letter. Always be positive and speak favorably.